



U.S. Representative Harry Teague New Mexico's Second Congressional District

HARRY WORKING FOR VETERANS

It's no secret that Harry Teague has become the voice in Congress for New Mexico veterans. He secured a seat on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and has championed a diverse set of issues such as veterans mental health, economic opportunity, women's veterans issues, veterans homelessness and more. Just as important, Harry's district staff offers direct assistance to veterans to help them with their casework with the VA and other federal agencies.

Harry's main achievements so far include ensuring timely funding for the VA so veterans' health care isn't held up by political wrangling; providing assistance for the caregivers of our new veterans so disabled veterans have the help they need to navigate transportation and medical needs; and paying special attention to economic needs of veterans, especially the House passage of the Energy Jobs for Veterans Act.

Perhaps what Harry has become best known for is his focus on the mental health of our troops and veterans. Although they have affected generations of G.I.s, PTSD and TBI are the signature wounds of our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. And our failure to address the mental health impacts of war has led to an inability to treat the unseen wounds of war.

Our failure to address the mental health concerns of our troops and veterans was thrown into stark relief by the suicide of veteran and Dona Ana County resident Kyle Barthel. After speaking with Kyle's mother and many veterans groups, Harry introduced the Kyle Barthel Veterans and Service Members Mental Health Screening Act to make sure that invisible wounds don't stay hidden and unaddressed. The bill was signed into law as part of last year's annual Defense Authorization. Determined to continue to help the troops and vets afflicted with PTSD, TBI and other unseen wounds, Harry then started the bipartisan Congressional Invisible Wounds Caucus. The Caucus examines our mental health challenges and potential solutions to those challenges.

The most important thing that Harry believes about veterans issues, however, is that we have so much more to do to support the men and woman who served our country. Just last month, Harry pushed two more veterans bills through the House – the first to cancel the veterans disability tax and expand concurrent receipt for over 100,000 veterans, and the second to give disabled veterans the same health coverage for their beneficiaries that civilians now get with private insurance.

ADVANCED APROPRIATIONS FOR THE VA: For the first time in history, Congress provided funding for veterans health care on a two year budget cycle. Congressman Teague fought for this change to ensure on-time funding for the VA and top notch care for our veterans. Signed into law as part of H.R. 1016!

H.R. 2931, THE KYLE BARTHEL VETERANS AND SERVICE MEMBERS MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING ACT: In June of 2009, Congressman Teague HR 2931, a bill that would provide for screenings of PTSD and TBI to prevent suicide and substance abuse among our veterans. Signed into law as part of the National Defense Authorization Act!



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H.R. 2180 – DISABLED VET HOME ASSISTANCE: Provides fee waiver for disabled veterans called back to active duty who are participating in VA home loan program. Passed House.

TEAGUE AMENDMENT – LETTING OUR VETERANS HELP OTHER VETERANS: House Amendment 47 to HR 1388 helps veterans with the benefits claims process and assists rural, disabled, and unemployed veterans with transportation needs. Signed into law!

H.R. 2738 – HELPING VETERANS CAREGIVERS: Congressman Teague authored HR 2738, a bill that would reimburse individuals that are providing care for veterans for expenses if they travel with a veteran to a medical appointment. Signed into law!

ENSURING JOBS FOR OUR VETERANS: Harry wrote an amendment to HR 3221 which allows certain funds to go to programs that prepare students to enter careers in the Veterans Administration and occupations in energy-related fields. Passed the House.

TEAGUE VETERANS CREDIT PROTECTION AMENDMENT to H.R. 627: Prevent credit cards from lowering credit ratings of service members in combat and disabled vets to preserve economic opportunity for veterans (H.AMDT.105 to H.R.627). Passed the house

FIGHTING TO END HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS: Congressman Teague sponsored HR 2504, a bill that increases the funding for homeless veteran transitional facilities. He also authored HR 3906, which provides funds to keep veteran families from losing their homes through financial assistance programs. Passed the House.

INVISIBLE WOUNDS CAUCUS: Congressman Teague founded this bi-partisan Congressional caucus devoted to addressing the mental health of our troops and veterans. Formed in House!

ENERGY JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT: Congressman Teague introduced legislation to encourage energy employers to hire veterans by providing them with reimbursements for employment training. Passed the House.

H.R. 2506, VETERANS HEARING AND ASSESEMENT ACT: The most prevalent ailment among veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars is called "tinnitus". It is a debilitating hearing impairment that needs to be treated. That's why Congressman Teague introduced a bill that calls for mandatory screening of tinnitus. Passed House.

INVESTING IN OUR INSTALLATIONS: Millions in appropriations and ARRA investment in Holloman and White Sands Missile Range.

FIGHTING TO END THE DISABLED VETS TAX: In May, Harry led a bi-partisan coalition of House Members requesting an expansion of concurrent receipt for over 100,000 disabled veterans. HR 4213 included provisions to eliminate the disabled veterans tax for 100,000 more veterans with fewer than 20 years of service and allow them to receive concurrent retirement and disability pay. Passed the House.



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EXPANDING THE HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS OF DISABLED VETERANS: Earlier this year, Congressman Teague introduced legislation (H.R. 5206) to allow disabled veterans to keep their children covered under CHAMPVA benefits until they are 26, same as civilians are entitled to under private insurance. The bill passed the House as an amendment to the FY 11 National Defense Authorization Act. Passed the House.

Congressional achievements –

FY 2009 SUPPLEMENTAL MILITARY APPROPRIATIONS: Supports troops by providing for needs to wind down the Iraq war and change strategy in Afghanistan; makes retroactive payments to 185,000+ service members whose enlistments were involuntarily extended since 9/11. Signed into law!

PUTTING VETERANS BACK TO WORK: Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, businesses were given a \$2,400 tax credit for hiring unemployed veterans. Signed into law!

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION: Authorizes a 3.4% pay raise for our troops, strengthening military readiness, expanding support for military families such as health care and housing, focusing on our strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan and redeployment from Iraq. Signed into law!

TRANSFER OF GI BILL BENEFITS TO CHILDREN OF FALLEN TROOPS: Expands New GI Bill benefits to cover cost of a college education for children of fallen U.S. service members. Signed into law!

HELPING OUR VETERANS WEATHER THE ECONOMIC STORM: Additionally, under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, nearly 2 million disabled veterans received a \$250 economic recovery payment. Signed into law!